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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NAIROBI 000083

SIPDIS
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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [SO](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [PINR](#)

SUBJECT: Somalia - Ahmed Madobe Frustrated By TFG Alleged Cold Shoulder

REF: NAIROBI 65

CLASSIFIED BY: Robert Patterson, Counselor for Somalia Affairs, State Department, Somalia Unit; REASON: 1.4(B), (D)

11. (C) Summary: Lower Juba militia commander Ahmed Madobe in mid-January reportedly planned to continue fighting al-Shabaab but was increasingly frustrated by the TFG's resistance to work with him and with Ogaden clan forces currently fighting in the region. A contact close to Madobe told Somalia Unit PolOff on January 19 that Madobe wanted to travel to Nairobi to meet with Sheikh Sharif during the TFG President's mid-January visit but that Sharif reportedly refused to meet with him. Madobe reportedly thinks the TFG is determined to push forward a Kenyan-backed Juba plan without the involvement of forces currently engaged against al-Shabaab in Lower Juba. Ogaden contacts tell us they are concerned about the possible consequences of the Kenyan-backed plan and that the TFG should do more political work, to include recognition of Madobe's role, in the region. (Note: The Kenyans have been training ethnic Somali forces, drawn largely from northeast Kenya, for several months. End note.)

12. (C) Summary Continued: We are advising contacts close to Madobe to encourage Madobe not/not to close the door on the TFG and to continue his fight against al-Shabaab in Lower Juba. As noted reftel, President Sharif does not appear completely convinced by the Kenyan plan and we do not/not think space is closed for TFG conversations with Madobe and key Ogaden clan leaders in Lower Juba. During a recent Somalia Unit meeting with President Sharif, the President agreed with our assessment there has not/not been enough political groundwork in Lower Juba to ensure TFG success there. We continue to urge President Sharif to talk to key Ogaden and Lower Juba leaders. Sharif told us in mid-January that he was considering options regarding the Kenyan-trained forces and floated the idea that the forces could be used in Mogadishu rather than Lower Juba. The new TFG Army Commander, Police Commissioner, and the National Security Minister reportedly support the Mogadishu alternative. End summary.

13. (C) A contact close to Lower Juba military commander Ahmed Madobe told Somalia Unit PolOff on January 19 that Madobe wanted to travel to Nairobi to meet with Sheikh Sharif during the TFG President's mid-January visit but that Sharif had refused to meet with him. Madobe reportedly wanted to talk to Sharif about working together against al-Shabaab in Juba. Madobe decided not to come to Nairobi after Sharif's alleged refusal to meet with him because he did not want to leave the battlefield and also feared the Kenyans would deny his ability to talk to the international community or

move freely. (Note: The Kenyans have tightly controlled movement of and access to Ibrahim Shukri, a close associate of Madobe, in Nairobi for several weeks. End note.)

¶4. (C) Madobe and Ogaden clan militia were reportedly encouraged when some al-Shabaab militia left Lower Juba to reinforce al-Shabaab efforts in Galgaduud region and in mid-January attacked the strategic town of Dhobley and captured a hospital and police station from al-Shabaab. Juba and NGO contacts on the ground tell us that many al-Shabaab forces re-deployed to Galgaduud during al-Shabaab's ill-fated efforts earlier this month to take the town of Dhusamareb from ASWJ, leaving Kismayo, Baidoa, and Wajid less defended. Juba contacts tell us that al-Shabaab has also begun to use Kismayo port revenues to support its efforts in other regions, resulting in defections from al-Shabaab in Lower Juba because al-Shabaab leaders there can no longer provide as many resources to would-be recruits.

¶5. (C) Our contacts claim that Ogaden leaders close to Madobe have made significant inroads in negotiations with Marehan leaders in Kismayo, resulting in Marehan clan defections from al-Shabaab. (Note: The Marehan subclan is a small minority in Lower Juba. Many Marehan militia have, consequently, formed a tactical alliance with al-Shabaab because they fear losing access to port revenues. End note.)

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¶6. (C) Madobe reportedly thinks the TFG is determined to push forward a Kenyan-backed Juba plan without the involvement of forces currently engaged against al-Shabaab in Lower Juba. Some contacts tell us that Ogaden leaders have in recent weeks convinced the Kenyans that Ogaden subclans currently engaged in fighting al-Shabaab in Lower Juba, as well as Madobe must be a key part of any anti-Shabaab effort in Lower Juba. However, Madobe reportedly does not see the benefit of talking to the Kenyans if he would ultimately be thrown under the bus by the TFG. (Note: President Sharif does not appear to be completely convinced by the Kenyan plan (reftel) and we do not/not think space is closed for TFG conversations with Madobe and key Ogaden clan leaders in Lower Juba. End note.)

¶7. (C) Ogaden contacts tell us that they are concerned about the possible consequences of the Kenyan-backed plan and that the TFG should do more political work, to include recognition of Madobe's role, in the region. Hassan al-Turki's son-in-law Raghe on January 19 told Somalia Unit PolOff that he fears that if Madobe is sidelined by the TFG it will create space for al-Turki to return to the region. (Note: Multiple contacts tell us that Madobe over recent months has tarnished al-Turki's credibility among the Ogaden clan, making him an increasingly irrelevant figure in Lower Juba dynamics. Raghe fell out with his father-in-law several months ago when al-Turki moved closer to al-Shabaab and, according to multiple Lower Juba contacts, abandoned the interests of the Ogaden clan. Contacts tell us that al-Turki intends to leave Lower Juba for Baidoa in order to join opposition forces there. End note.)

¶8. (C) In addition, contacts tell us that Madobe is in communication with the Ethiopians. Ogaden clansmen in Kenya reportedly fear that if Madobe is sidelined by the TFG and the Kenyan plan moves forward, that Madobe may turn to the Ethiopians for support, a move that our contacts think would destabilize the wider region as Ethiopia and Kenya back different players in Lower Juba.

¶9. (C) Comment: We are advising contacts close to Madobe to encourage Madobe not/not to close the door on the TFG and, against

the backdrop of al-Shabaab's recent tactical blunders, to continue his fight against al-Shabaab in Lower Juba. President Sharif does not appear to be completely convinced by the Kenyan plan and we do not think space is closed for TFG conversations with Madobe and key Ogaden clan leaders in Lower Juba. During a recent Somalia Unit meeting with President Sharif, the President agreed with our assessment there has not/not been enough political groundwork in Lower Juba to ensure TFG success there. We continue to urge President Sharif to talk to key Ogaden and Lower Juba leaders. Sharif told us in mid-January that he was considering options regarding the Kenyan-trained forces and floated the idea that the forces could be used in Mogadishu rather than Lower Juba. The new TFG Army Commander, Police Commissioner and the National Security Minister reportedly support the Mogadishu alternative.

RANNEBERGER